

Myths Regarding Gifted Students - Part 1

Understanding the unique characteristics of giftedness and how this might play out for an individual is important for parents to comprehend. Only then will parents be able to help advocate responsibly when students are faced with what might be seen as educational issues. Much research has centered around gifted characteristics and many myths have developed. Here are myths based on the work by M. Galbraith, Jim Delisle, and Don Treffinger.

Myth 1 - Gifted students have it made and don't need any help in school.

Truth- Every student needs assistance with something, especially gifted students who may already possess the knowledge presented to same-aged peers. Boredom in class is listed as a major reason gifted students get into trouble at school. They still need a well-trained teacher who can challenge and support their needs so they don't fall victim to boredom or underachievement.

Myth 2 - Gifted students make good grades and love school.

Truth- Many of the traditional schools are designed for the average student and therefore do not provide the necessary challenge gifted students need to be excited about school. Many gifted students have interest areas outside the scope of the state required curriculum and therefore may be less than interested in school content even though they are capable of mastering the curriculum quickly. This leads to underachievement and even dropping out altogether.

Myth 3 - Gifted students are good at everything.

Truth- Gifted students learn and view things differently than other students. While some gifted students may excel at most subjects, there are those who have a gift in only one or two subject areas. There are also gifted students who are exceptional at other talents. Moreover, there are gifted students who also have a learning handicap which could mean they are not very good at academic endeavors.

Myth 4 - Gifted students make everyone else in the class and should be used as class tutors.

Truth - Watching a student who is expected to excel or succeed has not been shown to increase the striving student's self-confidence. Gifted students benefit from classroom interactions with others of a similar level. They often can become bored and frustrated when used as a tutor for striving students. Many gifted students lack the patience to work with struggling students, and most have not been trained in appropriate teaching strategies.

Myth 5 - All children are gifted.

Truth - While most students have strengths and positive characteristics, they are not all identified as gifted. Gifted students are those that perform or have the ability to perform at a higher level than their same age or grade peers. Their unique abilities require an adjustment to the content or presentation of material.